One Little Injun

By
MARGARET
EMMA
DITTO

Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City

One Little Injun

One Little Injun

By MARGARET EMMA DITTO

I AM a jolly little Indian papoose. I keep pretty close to my mother. She does not often like to face a responsibility of my size, but she will shoulder it any time, and we are bound together by the strongest ties.

When I am at home I live in a wigwam which mother and I built. We made it of poles covered with bark and skins. We built it together. Mother did the work, and I backed her up heavily, and between us both we pulled through without interrupting father, who was busy sitting

around and basking in the sun and smoking. My father is bound to bask in all the sun there is, no matter how much time it takes to do it, and he is just as ambitious about the smoking; he is bound to do it all himself, and he does not want mother and me to meddle with it; and it is a good deal the same way with the eating. He works at basking and smoking and eating nearly all the time when he is not sleeping, unless there should be a war or a hunt; then he goes off with a gun. It gives a look of luxury and repose to our wigwam to see father sitting out against the warm side of it watching mother and me work. With-

out this our home would seem cold, stern and uninviting.

Mother and I do all the rest of the work; we plant and hoe and harvest the crops; we grind the corn between stones or pound it in a mortar; then we make it into cakes, and roast them in the fire for father to eat. Mother does it, but I keep right around after her, and see to it all.

Sometimes we have nothing to eat—roots, berries, acorns, everything gives out. My father can shoot no squirrels, my mother can get no corn. Then we start for the Agency to get rations. It is a long tramp, but I don't mind it, for mother does the walking. We

form a procession of two—a double-header. Mother heads the front and I head the rear. As the column moves forward I go ahead backward, and I pass everything on the road that is not going my way. Of course, I can't see what I am coming to till I am going away from it.

The first thing I notice is our wigwam and cornstalks and bean poles. They are large at first, then they get smaller and fainter till they are no bigger than a mosquito, and then they fade quite away. So all our village goes from sight, and the sky gets big and empty, and the earth has no end. At length we come to things—horses,

mules, ditches, rivers, trees, houses. One by one they bounce upon me from around mother's shoulder. They all begin big and strong and they go away little and faint. Everything I see is going away from me. I don't know what is coming, and I can't dodge it till it is past. That is what comes of going ahead backward.

My people are pretty much like me. The old Mother Government straps them upon a board and shoulders them around from one place to another. If she hears them moan with hunger, she feeds them; if she hears them shiver with cold, she blankets them; when they shriek and kick with rage, she

beats them. She lets them live on the back side of somewhere till somebody else wants it, and then she bundles them off to the other side of nowhere which nobody wants.

My people, like me, are going ahead backward. Once they had all America to hunt and fight in; now they have only a small portion of the land where they can stay. The father of all my fathers could shoot an arrow right through a bison, but his son could only kill a bear, and the bear-killer's son could only kill a deer, and the deer-killer's son shot foxes, and the fox-killer's son shot squirrels, and the squirrel-killer's son—that is myself—can

only catch flies. Ah! my people started in "big Injun," but they are coming out little papoose.

White men who stay home and make books say my people are dying out; but white men who look around and count say my people are living on, as many as ever. Oh! it is chaps like me that keep the Indian question going. There are thousands upon thousands like me, bright-eyed, brown-skinned, lusty young braves, at this very minute cutting our eye-teeth on our knuckle-bones and toughening our lungs on young war-whoops, but we are always on the rear side and looking backward.

ONE LITTLE INJUN

They say there are white babies who are carried upon their mother's hearts and next to their cheeks; these babies are always looking forward, and everything starts small and grows large and comes toward them, and they catch it if they want it. These babies have their eyes and ears trained to find out what is coming, their foreheads bulge out to meet future events, and their noses are sharpened upon them as they whiz by. So these babies grow to be strong men. They talk with the lightning; fire and water are their horses, and the smoke is their banner. The forests and the mountains bow down to them.

ONE LITTLE INJUN.

Oh! old Mother Government, take up my poor people and bear them upon they heart! feed them with the milk of human kindness; give them justice, and teach them, by example, the law of love. Then shall my people lift up their heavy hands; they shall "look forward, and not backward, up, and not down, and lend a hand."

No. 65—3d Ed.—4, 1912
5 cts. per copy, $3.00 per 100